

After skillfully and sensitively portraying years of courage, hope, and hard work, along with disappointment, resistance, and betrayal, and yet more courage and hope, Dittmer closes with comments by activist Bob Moses. The movement, Moses said, "brought Mississippi, for better or worse, up to the level of the rest of the country" (pp. 429-30).

Dittmer's focus on local people and local priorities in this absorbing account brings the Mississippi movement to the rest of us. It should be read by anyone interested in the civil rights movement. Moreover, *Local People* will be one of the books that reshapes the way historians view the civil rights movement as the cumulative weight of local studies challenges the dominant national perspective on the movement's importance.

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*Women, Development, and Communities for Empowerment in Appalachia.* By Virginia Rinaldo Seitz. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. Pp. vii, 288. Notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$57.50; paperbound, \$18.95.)

In southwestern Virginia's seven coal-mining counties, the War on Poverty lost its momentum during the oil crisis *cum* coal boom that began in 1973. But since the early 1980s and the return of stable oil imports, coal mining layoffs have snowballed and a new wave of grassroots organizing has been under way.

At first, that new wave was best symbolized by the Dunganon Development Commission (DDC), an organization based in Scott County, Virginia, and intent on promoting poor people's empowerment—especially poor women's empowerment—by combining GED programs and specially designed community college courses with income generating projects, particularly cooperatives. The DDC's greatest success was probably its Coal Employment Project, which fought both coal companies and male miners' traditional *machismo* to help women achieve high-paying underground jobs. In 1987, following much favorable publicity, the DDC received a large federal grant to create a sewing cooperative, but internal power struggles for control of that project lowered the morale of all concerned.

Later, a less dramatic and more communal effort achieved greater success: the Ivanhoe Civic League based in Wythe County, Virginia, and led by a charismatic local woman named Maxine Waller. But meanwhile the highly abrasive 1989–1990 strike by the United Mine Workers (UMW) against Pittston Coal Company temporarily propelled thousands of people into local activism.

Into that heady flux stepped the author of this book, a sympathetic scholar interested in how political activism can change women's lives. Seitz conducted lengthy interviews with about twelve active women, and she makes no secret of her sympathy for those women. The bulk of Seitz's book is a valuable selection of quotations from her interviewees, quotations that she has organized into six thematic chapters ("Family," "Work," "Community," etc.) and that she controls within a generally impressive feminist interpretation.

Each of Seitz's interviewees has, or has had, men intimately involved in her life. Here those men do not receive equal time—nor any time at all. About half of the interviewees report major mistreatment by men in their past personal lives. Thus the absence here of male testimony may be partly unavoidable. But just as the men in these women's personal lives lack a voice here, likewise do the managers of coal companies and of garment factories and other adversaries of Seitz's interviewees—they too appear only through the women's testimony. Even leaders of the UMW come in for censure. Early during the UMW's strike against Pittston, the union leaders authorized a much-publicized "Camp Solidarity" for visiting sympathizers. The UMW also authorized a Family Auxiliary to monitor local community interests. Among the women whom Seitz interviewed were several auxiliary members who came to "feel that the union 'sold them out' in its need for a victory in Southwest Virginia: 'All they really wanted was a contract that they could say was won with the strike,' was a comment from a fiercely pro-labor member [of the Auxiliary]. Many men have *not* returned to work and more and more men are losing their jobs" (p. 176).

Despite the absence of male voices, management voices, or union leaders' voices, Seitz's book is valuable as direct testimony by women who are in the midst of social—and personal—transformations. As for Seitz's interpretation, that cannot fully receive justice in this short review. The best-known of her favorite authorities are Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970), James C. Scott (*Weapons of the Weak*, 1985), Jaqueline Dowd Hall on "Disorderly Women," and Lydia Sargent on "the unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism."

This is a welcome book that is basically political but that could point its author, if she chooses, toward a fully-elaborated theory of personal transformation through social activism.

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